

Washington State Criminal Sentencing Task Force
Sentencing Grid Subgroup
Meeting Summary: January 12, 2021
Zoom Digital Conferencing Technology

Attendees:

- Russ Brown (alt. for Jon Tunheim),
Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
- Keri-Anne Jetzer (alt. for Judge Saint Clair),
Sentencing Guidelines Commission
- Greg Link, *Washington Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys; Washington Defender Association*
- Judge Wesley Saint Clair, *Sentencing Guidelines Commission*
- Melody Simle (alt. for Suzanne Cook),
Statewide Family Council
- Clela Steelhammer (research/data support),
Caseload Forecast Council
- Nick Straley (alt. for Nick Allen), *Interests of Incarcerated Persons*
- Jon Tunheim, *Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys*

Guests: Megan Allen

Facilitation Team: Amanda Murphy, Chris Page, Maggie Counihan, and Hannah Kennedy

WELCOME & AGENDA REVIEW

Amanda welcomed Sentencing Grid Subgroup (Subgroup) members and reviewed the agenda. She reminded the Subgroup that the Task Force's 2021 work would focus on the sentencing grid and encouraged members to reach out to the Facilitation Team with input on how best to get the full Task Force up to speed on the sentencing grid and its complexities. Chris and Amanda welcomed new Task Force member and newly appointed chair of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission (SGC), Judge Wesley Saint Clair. Judge Saint Clair and other Subgroup members introduced themselves and Amanda summarized the Subgroup's work over the past year.

2021 WORKING PLAN DISCUSSION

The Subgroup discussed how to bring the full Task Force up to speed on the grid conversations to date. The bulleted list below summarizes Subgroup members' ideas:

- Facilitate a "grid 101" workshop or presentation to provide all members with an overview of the basic mechanics of Washington's current sentencing grid.
- Facilitate one or more panel discussion(s) of a real or hypothetical case where Task Force members could hear from judges, defense attorneys, and prosecutors discussing how the grid operates in practice. Members suggested including voices on the panel with firsthand experience with the system (i.e., individuals who have served or are currently serving a sentence and victims or their family members who have experienced the trial and sentencing process).
- Create a "grid cheat sheet" defining common grid terms (e.g., multipliers, criminal history score, offense seriousness level, aggravators/mitigators, etc.).

ADDING NEW VOICES TO THE GRID SUBGROUP

Members noted that those most impacted by the sentencing system are missing from these conversations, including formerly incarcerated individuals and system-based victim advocates. The Subgroup discussed ways of incorporating these voices, while also ensuring the Subgroup remains small enough to be effective on a weekly basis. The Subgroup discussed ways to ensure any new voices would have the support and buy-in of the full Task Force and would feel valued for their participation. A

Subgroup member noted that most Task Force members participate as part of their job and thus get paid for the time they dedicate to the Task Force; the Subgroup suggested asking the co-chairs about the possibility of creating a stipend.

NEXT STEPS & ACTION ITEMS

- **Sentencing Effectiveness Working Group members** will compile list of potential new voices.
- **The Facilitation Team** will ask Lauren Knoth about providing a “Grid 101” presentation at a Task Force meeting.
- **The Facilitation Team** will prepare a first draft of a sentencing grid “cheat sheet” for the Subgroup to review.